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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4142  
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 9374  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6271  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4316  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3139  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9891  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 3233  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 0334  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2310  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 6825  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 4689  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1310

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001399

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/23/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: IDP NUMBER CLIMBS TO 180,000 IN NORTH  
AND EAST; UNHCR REQUESTS EMERGENCY FUNDING

REF: A. COLOMBO 1379

[1](#)B. COLOMBO 1361

[1](#)C. COLOMBO 976 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: CDA James R. Moore for reasons 1.4(b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On August 22, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Country Representative Amin Awad briefed Charge' on population displacement in the North and East due to renewed military engagement between the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) (ref A). The number of conflict Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has risen from 60,000 to 180,000 since July. The UNHCR is requesting an additional \$4.9 million from foreign governments, including the US, to provide shelter, water sanitation, food and medicine to Sri Lanka's conflict displaced through 2006. US Embassy Colombo requests that PRM and the US mission to the UN in Geneva consider supporting UNHCR's immediate efforts here. End Summary.

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IDPs Have Tripled Since July  
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[1](#)2. (C) Country Representative for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Amin Awad briefed Charge' on Sri Lanka's conflict IDP crisis since April 2006 and requested US contribution to an expected \$4.9 million needed to assist IDPs in the remainder of the 2006 calendar year. Awad noted that 120,000 new internally displaced persons (IDPs) since Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) military engagement began at Mavilaru dam in northeastern Sri Lanka on July 20 have brought the total number of conflict IDPs to 180,000 (ref B) in the predominantly-Tamil-speaking North and East since hostilities in the regions began to increase in April. The UNHCR has declared its Sri Lanka operation a "Scenario III High Intensity Conflict" and is coordinating with other UN agencies and the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) to respond rapidly to the multiplied humanitarian needs.

13. (C) Awad stressed the UNHCR's need to provide water and sanitation as well as shelter, food and supplies to the 180,000 IDPs. He expressed concern that a GSL-hired cargo ship, which departed Colombo August 23 under an International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) flag, was only able to carry 1500 tons of the 2500 tons anticipated because bad weather prevented fully loading the ship. The Government Agent of Jaffna, K. Ganesh, told poloff August 21 that he expected food supplies in Jaffna district to last only until August 24. Ministry of Nation Building and Disaster Management Secretary M. Jayasinghe told poloff on August 23 that the partially loaded cargo ship had left that morning because IDPs and local civilians could not wait longer for food. According to a World Food Program representative in Jaffna, the UN has 900 tons of food supplies locally, which it began to distribute August 22 with the help of NGOs and humanitarian mine action agencies, but additional, periodic delivery of foodstuffs will be critical.

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Access Difficult  
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14. (C) Awad reiterated what we have heard from other NGOs and international agencies (reftels): Many agencies, including UNHCR, are having difficulty accessing the IDPs, largely as a result of security restrictions due to the ongoing hostilities. Awad also noted that the GSL has imposed restrictions on movement in and/or access to a number of areas, including parts of Jaffna, Batticaloa, and Trincomalee districts. This restricted access to displaced populations has serious implications for the protection and delivery of assistance to the IDPs, Awad said.

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US Assistance  
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15. (C) Awad requested that the US contribute to a new \$4.9 million fund that the UNHCR in Sri Lanka estimates it will need to care for the 180,000 persons displaced from the escalation of hostilities since April. Charge' assured Awad that we would convey UNHCR's appeal to the Department.

16. (C) Action Request: Embassy requests that the appropriate bureaus liaise with the US mission to the UN to consider US support for the UNHCR's efforts to provide immediate relief to the growing number of conflict displaced in Sri Lanka.  
End Action Request.  
MOORE